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Westmoreland Blamed for Faulty Troop Reports

Witness for CBS Testifies General's Policy Caused 'Massive Falsification'

By RUDY ABRAMSON, *Times Staff Writer*

NEW YORK—Former CIA analyst Sam Adams told a federal jury here Monday that Army Gen. William C. Westmoreland caused a "massive falsification" of intelligence during the Vietnam War by imposing a ceiling upon the numbers of enemy troops.

Winding up two days of testimony as CBS' star witness against the now-retired general's \$120-million libel suit, Adams insisted that the network's controversial 1982 documentary, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception," was a careful and "accurate reflection of what went on."

The intelligence community, he said, tried to fool the American people about the strength of U.S. adversaries in Vietnam but "wound up fooling ourselves."

"It explains, in part, how we managed to lose this war," Adams declared.

Left CIA in 1973

Adams, who in 1967 was one of the CIA's top experts on the Viet Cong, resigned from the agency in 1973 and spent several years conducting research and arguing that military intelligence on enemy strength had been purposely doctored.

His persistence led to the 1982 CBS documentary, which contended that Westmoreland, as U.S. troop commander in Vietnam, was part of a conspiracy to underestimate enemy strength so it would

appear that the war was going better for the United States than actually was the case.

CBS contended in the documentary that an arbitrary ceiling of about 300,000 was set for enemy forces.

Adams, who will be cross-examined by Westmoreland's lawyers on Wednesday, ended his direct testimony by contending that a ceiling ordered by Westmoreland was the basic cause of all the abuses that followed.

During his investigation, Adams told the jury Monday, he had thought there was more to the story than the documentary finally reported.

Sought Evidence of Pressure

"I felt there might have been political pressure on Gen. Westmoreland to come up with what he came up with," he testified. But, he said, when no evidence of that was developed, "it ended up that we went with what we had."

The documentary focused on the several months leading up to the January, 1968, Tet offensive. At the time, it appeared that the United States was gradually winning the conflict. But the offensive set off a profound political reaction, which the documentary contended was a result of the country's having been misled about the progress of the war.

During Adams' six hours on the witness stand Monday, CBS law-

yers showed the jury much of the hourlong program, interrupting it at crucial moments to question Adams about the evidence he had for major assertions in the program. Asked whether he believed the U.S. command had failed to report honestly on enemy troop levels, Adams testified that "every report coming out of MACV (the U.S. high command) was dishonest."

The view, he insisted, was shared by Col. Gains Hawkins, who was Westmoreland's expert on the "enemy order of battle"—the phrase intelligence officers used to describe troop strength and deployment.

In the telecast, Hawkins said of the official estimates: "There was never any reluctance on my part to tell Sam or anybody else with a need to know that these figures were crap."

Adams testified Monday that both Hawkins and Maj. Gen. Joseph McChristian, Westmoreland's chief intelligence officer, had heard Westmoreland express concern about the political repercussions of reporting higher enemy numbers to Washington.

At the time of the Tet offensive, official U.S. estimates put enemy strength at 224,000, even though some 35,000 were killed and as many as 150,000 were wounded during the offensive. In March, following the offensive, Adams said his own estimate of enemy strength at the time of Tet had been 600,000.